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ABSTRACT

Developing an active, collaborative relationship between schools and parents, with a goal of enhancing the career equity guidance of young adolescents, is a difficult task. The school counselor, by training and school position, is often the individual change agent who spearheads the development of innovative programs designed to involve and educate teachers and parents in the career development and decision-making processes of their children. Effecting change in school settings can be a tedious, time-consuming and lonely procedure. Counselors must clearly articulate their programs to administrators, teachers, children, and more importantly, to parents. This document describes several ways in which counselors may work with parents and other community adults to create a better involvement between the school and the community. These include: (1) identifying a problem; (2) the family and career development; (3) a longitudinal approach; (4) involving teachers; (5) involving the family; (6) reaching out; and (7) counselor-parent activities (career notebook night, parent groups, parent-training groups, career seminars, and parent support/discussion groups). (ABL)

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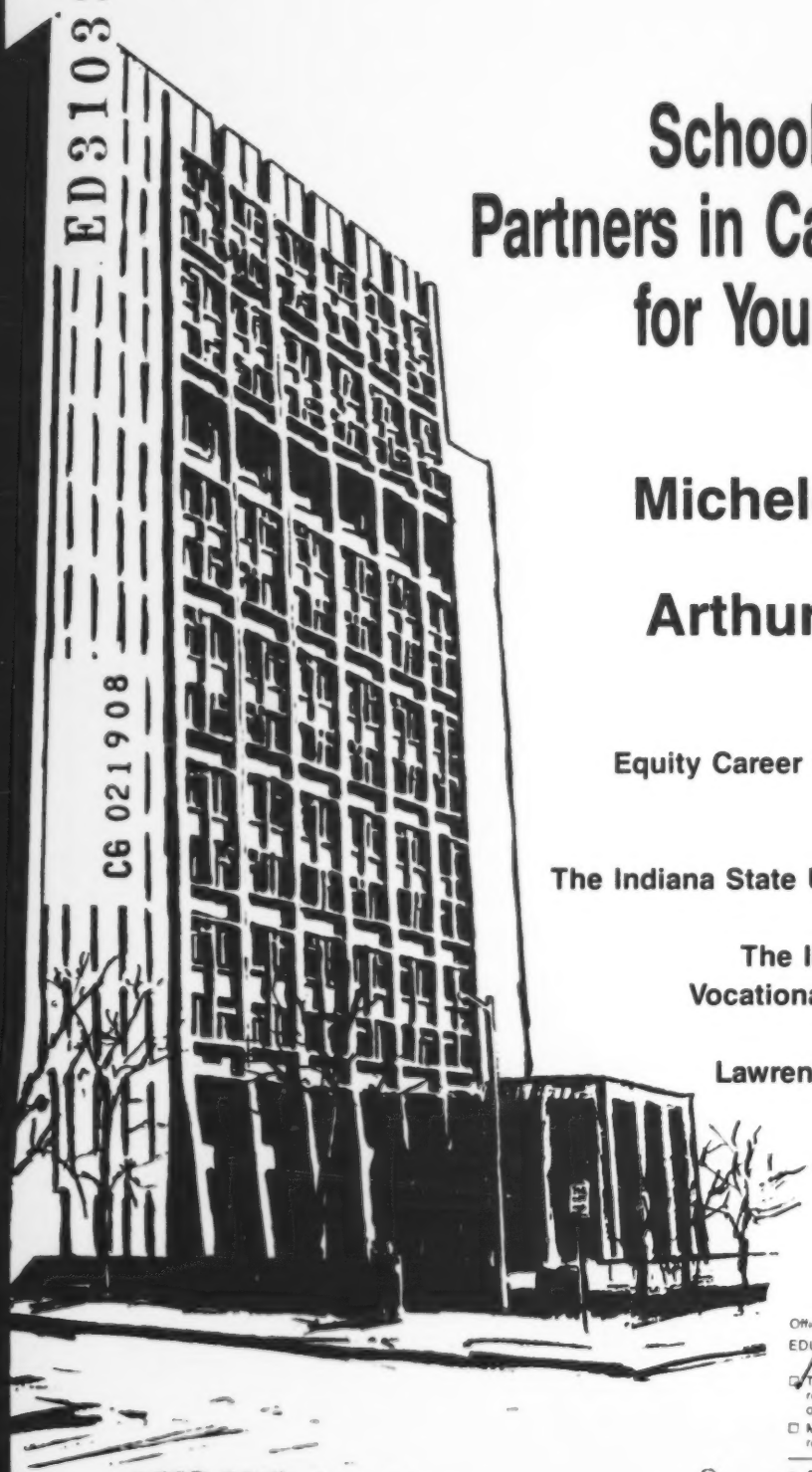

Schools and Parents: Partners in Career Equity Guidance for Young Adolescents

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and
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Equity Career Guidance Project Monograph #2

Sponsored by
The Indiana State University Department of Counseling
and
The Indiana Commission on
Vocational and Technical Education

Lawrence Beymer, Ph.D., Editor

July, 1989

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Project Goals

1. To help junior high and middle schools shift the criterion for successful career development guidance **from** that of pressing for an early, single, specific choice **to** that of formulating a list of several possibilities, perhaps including one or two probabilities.

2. To help youngsters at this age to understand that it is acceptable, normal, and desirable that they not yet have a single choice in mind at this age and stage of their development.

3. To help students, parents, teachers, and counselors become aware of the several kinds of erroneous and counterfeit information that may inadvertently cause young people to self-limit their life plans and goals. Among these are sources of bias and inequities based upon sex, geographical location, socio-economic class, ethnic and racial identity, and/or ability to finance formal education.

4. To help pupils replace the question, "What are you going to do when you leave school?" with "What kind of a life do you want for yourself when you are 25?" The rationale is that in rapidly-changing times like these, nobody can answer the first question with much accuracy, and if the student can establish some personal goals for the foreseeable future, it may be possible to use that target in order to make school more meaningful.

5. To re-emphasize the idea that the individual still has considerable control in inventing his or her future, even in a state where many traditional opportunities are disappearing and new ones are emerging.

6. To help students and parents understand that vocational and technical education can serve as the means toward the broad goals of education as well as a direct means to a productive, successful, satisfying life.

7. To develop a research network among our participating schools, developing sources of data which will make it possible for all of us to make better decisions. At the same time, the communication network being established between our participating school and job-alike educators will make it possible for us to share ideas and materials.

The Department of Counseling, Indiana State University
and the
The Indiana Commission on Vocational and Technical Education

What is education? What is a school? It is ironic that we spend so much money, time, and effort on both without first attaining a consensus upon reasonable operational definitions.

Think of education as **changes in behavior as a result of experiences**. Think of the school as **a deliberately-created learning environment created by and supported by society** in the belief that certain behaviors are so important to the success and survival of our form of civilization that we cannot take the risk that they will be acquired merely by chance.

It is very important to note that the school is only one of many environments where individuals learn by experience. The fact of the matter is that up to age 18 the typical youngster spends only a small percent of awake hours in school-located learning environments.

Imagine a high school senior who graduates on his or her 18th birthday; assume that during those years she or he averaged 8 hours of sleep a night, and was neither absent nor tardy during the 12 years of schooling, each 180 days in length, six hours per day. That calculates to about 11% of all lifetime waking hours up to graduation spent in school buildings. Because not all school years are 180 days in length, because most students have less than perfect attendance, and because the six hour school day includes many activities other than directed teaching and learning, that 11% of awake-hours as formal school learning time is optimistic. *We can estimate with considerable confidence that for the average high school graduate not more than 10% of his or her lifetime waking hours were spent in academic learning environments provided by the schools.* The remaining 90% are spent in other types of settings and surroundings which provide other forms and types of learning experiences and opportunities. If the public, the press, and the politicians have high and often unreasonable expectations about what schools can accomplish, perhaps this contact-time analysis provides a useful perspective.

Consequently, schooling and education are not interchangeable terms. Educational experiences do occur in school, to be sure, but they also take place in greater quantity (and sometimes in greater quality) in learning environments created by the home, the media, and the community. In many cases, these are more powerful forces than the school can counteract no matter how sincere the effort nor

how many resources are applied to the task. If inputs from many learning environments are coordinated and provided in concert, much can be accomplished; if they are competitive or contradictory, we should not be surprised if little or nothing is accomplished.

Certainly this applies to equity-fair career and life planning. No matter how enlightened and open minded the counselors and teachers may be, if dad thinks a career choice is gender-inappropriate for his son or if mother believes that her daughter will jeopardize her femininity by some career choice, gender-fair and appropriate decisions will become even more difficult for the youngster to make.

Other complications are easily identifiable. The very high divorce and illegitimacy levels in Indiana result in many youngsters growing up in single parent families where the lone parent has insufficient energy, time, and/or money to provide the attention, counsel, experiences, and advice they would like to provide for their children.

Therefore it appears that we have no choice: if Indiana schools are to offer comprehensive, timely, appropriate, gender-fair life and career planning services to their young adolescents, then we must find ways to reach out and constructively involve parents and community agencies in the process. To do otherwise is to fail the students, the schools, and our state.

In this monograph Dr. Boyer and Dr. Horne point out some of the dynamics of this partnership and make some suggestions on implementing more effective services. Involving parents and community agencies in the education of youth is likely to intensify in Indiana in the next few years, and we shall all be better off as a result. We hope this monograph will stimulate your thinking and action on this important issue.

Lawrence, Beymer, Ph.D.
Editor

IDENTIFYING A PROBLEM

As counselor educators, we have frequently heard the complaint that educational problems are bigger than the counselors working to solve them. The problems include:

-administrators who want counselors to be assistant administrators rather than have them functioning in the capacity for which they were trained;

-teachers who define their roles as imparting subject-matter knowledge rather than attending to the personal growth and/or discipline of children;

-parents[1] who appear to have abdicated their family roles and do not seem to really care about their childrens' behavior or learning.

We have frequently found that the difficulties experienced in addressing these challenges are very real: administrators do have their expectations of counselor responsibilities, teachers at times have lost their zeal for attending to children rather than subject matter, and parents often are less involved than is desirable. At times, though, the problem is less a part of the educational system and more a reflection of counselors not having specific ideas on how to address the complex problems they encounter. Counselors typically have a strong desire to help students in their vocational growth and development, but find themselves without solid programs that would allow them to be successful in a manner that satisfies them, the administrators, teachers, parents, and most of all, the students. The purpose of this paper is to identify several ways in which counselors may work with parents and other community adults, to create better involvement between the school and the community.

[1] For the purposes of this paper, the term "Parent(s)" will be used when referring to the family, and parent may mean any of the following: parent, single parent, biological parent, step-parent, foster parent with legal responsibility, or other adults living in the home who have legal or actual responsibility for the child (children) involved.

THE FAMILY AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

While it is now universally accepted that the family is a primary influence on young people's career values, patterns, awareness, and attitudes, the role and influence of parents and the parental environment on career development had been virtually ignored by vocational counselors until the mid-1970s. School personnel typically assumed much of the responsibility for providing vocational and educational guidance to youngsters until the career education movement of the 1970s publicly recognized and validated the role of parents and the community as important partners in preparing young people for the world of work (Hoyt, 1974).

Surveys and professional literature reviews since that time consistently report that parents are the primary determiners of children's career choices. Other influences, in descending order include friends, teachers, counselors, and siblings. None of these reference groups, however, come close to parents as the primary architects of young people's career decision-making. Most students turn to their parents for advice with important decisions (McDaniels & Hummel, 1984) and the 12th Annual Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools reveals that parents helping their children with career planning is a high priority. When asked to rank the forces they saw as having the most influence on their children's occupational choice, both mothers and fathers identified themselves first, the other parent second, the child third and the school fourth (Birk & Blimline, 1984).

The family's influence on vocational development is seen as operating on at least two dimensions. The first has to do with the opportunities the family provides its members. These influences are related to the family's socio-economic status, ethnic background, and family configuration. The second dimension includes the socialization practices and parent-child relationships that are typical of the family. These family attributes influence career decision-making in that family members, especially parents, transmit messages about what jobs are ap-

propriate for other family members on the basis of sex, position in the family, ethnic background, and the like (Herr & Lear, 1984; Schulenberg, Vondracek & Crouter, 1984).

"In their role as primary career development facilitators, parents frequently reinforce sex-stereotyped career choices" (Birk & Blimline, 1984, p. 315) by encouraging, or not encouraging, certain choices and by making decisions to provide financial support to some activities and not to others. As an example, Birk & Blimline (1984) found that children whose parents discussed careers with them, showed stereotypic sex-typed patterns of occupational preferences when their choices were coded according to primary Holland Code category. Boys accounted for most of the Realistic and Investigative choices. Girls accounted for the majority of the Artistic and Social choices, and all of the conventional choices (Birk & Blimline, 1984). The traditional Holland Code cluster for males is RIE and for females is ASC.

These observations and research findings leave little doubt about the position of parents and families as primary influences of young people's career development in our society. Clearly, efforts toward equity career guidance cannot be successful without the involvement of informed parents. Parents need both accurate information and unbiased attitudes about careers and career planning in order to influence their children's career decision-making in positive ways. If career awareness and career choice are to become free of sex-role stereotyping so that individuals can have the widest possible range of occupational choices, then early family socialization patterns and belief systems must change.

While school counselors may not be able to easily influence the family "opportunity" factors, mentioned above, they are, in essence, an excellent local resource to expand and clarify the information family members and the community hold about working, occupations, careers and today's world of work. In fact, both the American Personnel and Guidance Association, (1975, now the American Association for Counseling and Development), and The Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (1976) have adopted counselor role and competency statements that clearly identify involving the family and the community in career education as part of a counselor's duties. Counselors can help parents become more informed, unbiased, and constructive agents of career development by engaging in an active, respectful partnership to facilitate wise and fully informed career decision-making in young people. As McDaniels and Hummel (1984) suggest, "parents are the greatest potential helpers for children's career planning--if and when they know how to help" (p. 227). Designing a counseling program that includes the active involvement of parents and other community members requires careful planning, and a sincere commitment on the part of the school counselor to being a facilitator of change within both the complex social and administrative system of the school and the local community.

A LONGITUDINAL APPROACH

In order to implement an innovative counseling program, which represents a change from what has been done and which involves parents, teachers, administrators, and the community, the counselor needs to make a commitment to move as quickly as possible while recognizing that a change of the magnitude we are seeking is a slow process. Allen and James (in press), Gutkin and Bossard (1984), and Meyers, Parson, and Martin (1979) have indicated that a lead time of three years is a minimum length of time within which one might expect change to take place. Therefore, we urge counselors to plan on a long-term change program rather than anticipating that a semester's project or a Saturday seminar will yield the outcome wanted.

A first step in establishing the change program is administrative support. Counselors need to clarify their program goal and develop a written plan to submit to their administrators in which they lay out:

-the goal and purpose of the program

-the rationale for why the program is important

-the time lines established

-the level of support needed

In seeking to have schools and parents work more closely together, the goal is to develop specific activities which the counselor would like to institute, and to clearly identify the purpose of each activity. The rationale needs to be articulated in such a manner that the administrator will see how the activities will enhance the educational environment. While administrators are interested in the educational growth of students, they want to see how the entire school environment will be improved by programs which require change in the "status quo." The time line must be realistic and provide information about changing functions and activities. For example, if the counselor is going to be performing fewer administrative functions as a result of the program changes, the time line should include when various functions will change. The section describing level of support required will need to address monetary, personnel, space, and administrative support requested.

Our experience is that unless administrative support exists from the top down through an educational system, change is not likely to occur. Administrators who request more active involvement between the counselor and the community need to provide adequate support for the changes requested. If a counselor is to provide evening or weekend hours to meet parent's schedule needs, then compensatory time should be provided. Administrators who do not back up their requests with a reasonable support program are, in fact, not supportive.

INVOLVING TEACHERS

Developing better interactions between the school and the family must include teachers. Once counselors have developed and presented a plan to administrators and obtained their cooperation, they must then turn to their teaching colleagues. Counseling programs may exist in isolation from teachers, but they will be considerably less effective.

Counselors have a different level of expertise than teachers, and the skills which make for effective counseling can be very helpful for establishing a supportive approach to involving parents in the schools. Teachers frequently see difficulties with students which counselors don't. We have found, though, that the problems are often interactional--they exist between both the teacher and student. Some teachers have very negative reactions to students who are different than the model student they would like to have in their classes. Students who are economically poor, live with a single parent or with a foster parent family, have a family history of alcoholism or other substance abuse, or perhaps who move frequently, can be especially challenging for teachers.

Counselors have developed teacher groups which can allow the counselor to work with teachers on a variety of issues, including effective classroom management, handling student behavior problems, understanding differences, and developing more effective communication skills with students....particularly with students who are different than the teacher in terms of family structure, or environmental background.

Learning how to talk with parents is a skill that counselors can help teachers master. We have found that many teachers feel very uncomfortable talking with parents and find them an imposition or perhaps even a threat. The annual parent-teacher conference is looked upon with tension and anxiety by many educators. The thought of actually meeting with family members on a more regular basis can cause even greater concern for some. We have previously developed critical-incident video tapes in which a variety of parents were displayed presenting various concerns to the camera. The tapes were then used by counselors to train teachers on how to respond to a variety of incidents, ranging from anger about how a student had been treated at school, to a parent presenting information about an impending divorce and fear of living alone as a single

parent. The tapes have been very useful for helping teachers learn to address the concerns of parents in an understanding, professional manner. Counselors could poll faculty to learn about issues or concerns about which they would like specific training and develop critical-incident videos targeted primarily to the needs of the teachers in their school.

Counselors may also work with teachers through parent-school groups. James and Jones (1985) have reported on parent-school groups run within a school setting in which teachers and administrators were encouraged to participate, not as leaders, but as parents or concerned adults. They indicated that the involvement of parents and teachers in such a situation provided several benefits:

-Parents had the opportunity of being on an equal basis with teachers;

-Parents could learn that teachers are human beings who don't have all the answers, yet are willing to learn and experience new ideas on working with children;

-Most teachers are parents at one level or another and can benefit from the experience.

INVOLVING THE FAMILY

As in all aspects of life, the family has become considerably more complicated in the last couple of decades. A situation has developed in which parents have less time at home with their children and have had to relegate much of the responsibility for child-management to other sources, like the school. At the same time, the educational enterprise has become taxed to the limit with larger classes, fewer resources, and unrealistic expectations from our society. While some families have considerably increased their economic security, a large number live in poverty. Although educational opportunities abound, many students and their families see the educational system as closed to them--a foreign environment. One way to address the problem is to have schools offer programs to families which can bridge the gap, while still recognizing the problems that exist.

REACHING OUT

Jones (1988) has written about how to reach out to parents in an article entitled "Dear Parent..." in which she describes ways the school needs to address the written style of communicating with parents. She has reported that even though the school is not seen by educators as an adversary, most parents dread the envelope with the school name in the upper-left corner. Even when their children do not have a pattern of problem behavior, many parents dread the school letter because it comes in an impersonal manner and is frequently written in "educationalese" so that parents feel intimidated by the language and the style of presentation. The "experts" at the school are seen in an authoritative position and their communications frequently enhance that perception. Based upon her experiences communicating with parents, Jones recommends the following considerations for school communications:

1. Know what you are going to say. Jones recommends being able to define in 10 words or less: what you want to say, who you need to say it to, why you need to say it, what action you require or desire from the reader.

If you are unable to do this, it is time to start the writing over again.

2. Get to the point right away. Spell out what is wanted and why. Explain clearly what you are planning to do and what you want from the reader. Anticipate what questions the reader might have and answer them in the letter; don't make them contact you for clarification.

3. Make your message easy to read. Jones reports that as many as one-third of the parents we attempt to

communicate with may be illiterate and unable to read everyday information. Therefore, the writing style should be as clear as the counselor can write it, using common sentence patterns. Try to put complex information in parallel written forms. Her example: "On Tuesday we will have eye tests, and on Friday we will have hearing tests" can be read and understood easily, compared to the same message presented in a complex, non-parallel form: "On Tuesday we will have eye tests, but the hearing tests won't be held until Friday.

4. Use the active voice and simple language. "Please understand that I cannot allow any more tardies this year," communicates more clearly and with more impact than, "Suspension will result unless this problem is resolved and punctuality is improved." Further, it is clearer to say who wants what, or "We believe that in our school...", rather than to use the vague expressions so common to educators; "The educational philosophy of the institution...".

5. Be tactful, friendly and sincere.

6. Be aware of your hidden audience. Communications from the school to a home do not remain in a vacuum. Both the positive and the negative are shared: sometimes by proud parents who want their club members to know about the accomplishments singled out by the school, and other times by angry parents who want to publish in the local newspaper the convoluted and poorly typed missive from the school. Be aware that the material sent out may be attended to by more than just the person addressed on an envelope.

7. Make your message look easy to read. Poorly prepared materials represent the level of care the school personnel have for the communication. If the material is mimeographed or printed with splotches, streaks, missing letters, or other unattractive characteristics, the message to the parents is either that the school lacks pride in what it sends out or that it doesn't care enough for the recipient to send the best.

COUNSELOR-PARENT ACTIVITIES

The number of activities which involve parents that counselors may establish is limited only by the imagination and the resources of the school. We will discuss several activities/programs which have been particularly useful for counselors in that they have received considerable support from administrators and teachers, parent evaluations have demonstrated that they are valued, and they have had a positive impact on the relationship between the school and community. The programs involve career exploration activities and parent groups.

Career Notebook Night

The Career Notebook Night described by James (undated) is an excellent way to involve parents in school activities. Most parents have considerable concern about and interest in their childrens' career options, regardless of whether the child is elementary, middle, junior, or senior high school level. As James reports:

"Parents will respond positively anytime their kids are involved in a school-sponsored activity. Witness any band concert, honors day, or basketball game and notice how many parents turn out. Counselors and teachers can take advantage of this given by instituting a career notebook night."

In order to establish the program, counselors should see that the offering isn't a "tag on" idea that is implemented as an afterthought, but rather is an activity built into the curriculum. While not requiring a considerable time investment, the work should be longitudinal, building over a number of weeks or months, and culminating in the Career Notebook Night. The activities need to occur within a classroom setting which will allow the counselor to work

closely with teachers in preparing materials and developing classroom activities that will result in the notebook. The process can be beneficial in that the teacher and counselor work cooperatively on the project, resulting in better working relationships. The teachers will develop materials which may be used over several years, and will also develop a better understanding of ways in which their academic area can be used to emphasize career development, regardless of student age.

In developing the Career Notebook, students need to have achievement and aptitude tests. Ideally, the results will be interpreted to the child in a three-way conference among the counselor, the child, and the parents. The interview can help the counselor develop an understanding of the career expectations held by parents. Parents will also learn what they need to do to help their child to achieve desired career future. If parents choose not to participate, the interpretation may occur either among the counselor, the child and teacher, or with the counselor and child alone.

The next section to be developed for the Career Notebook is self-exploration. This unit generally has to be tailored to the class, the age of the student, and the subject matter. Self-exploration includes exercises and activities that help the students understand needs, values, and interests. This would be followed by information on fantasy career choices and would provide the opportunity for students to explore fantasy occupations. This exploration may include paper and pencil activities, such as using the Dictionary of Occupational Titles, or other career materials. It may also include the use of computer programs designed for the age group being taught.

After learning about their own achievement and aptitude attributes, identifying personal needs and values, and exploring fantasy topics, students would interview a worker in the field. In doing this, a Yellow Pages of Career Resource People can be developed by the class. The Yellow Pages may be developed by sending questionnaires or inventories to businesses, agencies, parents, relatives, and others, who may respond with information or personal visits.

Students should then begin planning the steps necessary to achieve their career goals, regardless of age level. A narrative which describes the summary reaction to the experience should be developed, and this should be incorporated into the final edition of the notebook.

Upon completion of the project, parents should be invited to a Career Notebook Night in which the notebooks are displayed and counselors, teachers, students, and administrators, are available to review the completed program with the parents. All notebooks should be available for review. The program is for all students, including some that may not ordinarily be included, such as students in LD and EMH classes.

The Career Notebook Night easily becomes self-perpetuating and after the first year becomes considerably easier to carry out. The process helps teachers, administrators, parents, and children develop a clearer picture of the kind of resource the counselor can be.

Parent Groups

Parents are generally interested in learning more effective ways of working with their children, regardless of their ages. Teachers often report that parents just don't parent their children very well today, but the argument becomes cyclical: high school teachers blame junior high teachers for the poor preparation of their students, while junior high teachers assign blame to elementary teachers, who in turn pass the blame back to parents. There are many points in which we may intervene to remedy the situation. Consulting with elementary teachers, running groups for teachers and students in junior high school, and doing more intensive career and life planning interventions in the high school, are just a few of the possibilities. One of the most powerful interventions is to offer groups for parents through the school system.

The parent group is particularly important for those members of the community who have the fewest resources. Steps must be taken, therefore, to help them bridge the

gap that often separates the school from the neighborhood. This includes considering the following recommendations:

-Invite parents to participate. A letter won't do it. Phone calls, personal visits, and particularly, neighborhood leaders who support the school, can provide the parents needed to participate.

-Provide services to families if you really want them there. This will include, possibly, transportation, child care for children after school or in the evenings.

-Find out what parents would want in a group: don't assume that all parents need or can use the same offering.

-Pace the group to the level of the parents involved. Groups that are problem-centered rather than theory centered offer the best hope of helping families.

-See that teachers coordinate their work with the groups, including developing instructional units or discipline methods that are consistent with what is taught in groups. This leads to administrative support, for when teachers and parents work consistently to achieve discipline goals, there are fewer problems in the school. Students also demonstrate change when teachers show interest in them, particularly interest supported by their parents.

Parent groups may take many forms, depending upon the age or developmental level of the students involved and the identified or expressed needs of their parents. The groups might take an educational approach and focus on general parent-training issues, such as Effective Parenting, Parenting Alone-A Group for Single Parents, Children's Sexuality, Drug Abuse Prevention and Parents, and Helping Students Explore Career Options, or they might take more of a support group focus, often as a follow-up to the educational group. Many of the groups that have been offered rely upon a counselor developing the initial group, but, following the first offering, lay leaders (parents) often work under the supervision of the counselor to host or continue the group meetings for interested parents.

Parent-Training Groups should be geared toward the developmental level of the children whose parents participate. It is important to remember that the skills which may be excellent for a parent of an elementary student (careful monitoring of the child's whereabouts, effective discipline for behaviors such as crying or tantrums, encouraging career awareness and fantasy exploration), may be very inappropriate for parents of teenagers (developing independence, autonomous decision-making, developing emancipation from the family, establishing tentative career plans). There is no such thing as an "ideal parent," but rather, there are parent skills needed for various stages of the family cycle. Parents do not have ready access to such knowledge and, instead, rely upon trial and error or models presented in the movies, television, or neighborhood. In surveys of parental recommendations for how schools may assist the family, right after classroom instruction comes the request to help family members learn better ways of functioning.

Fortunately, for counselors, it is not necessary to invent the parent training/parent skills group any more than it was necessary to invent the occupational materials used in the Career Notebooks activity. Several commercially prepared training programs exist. Examples include Parent Effectiveness Training (Gordon, 1970), Parents are Teachers (Becker, 1971), Systematic Training in Effective Parenting (Dinkmeyer and McKay, 1976), and Troubled Families (Fleishman, Horne, and Arthur, (1983). These programs require varying degrees of skill to apply and have different emphases. The most promising approach when preparing to offer a parent training experience is to review several models and then develop one which best fits the specific needs of the parents and local school community.

Career Seminars for parents provide a structured educational group within which parents can learn the skills to increase their ef-

fectiveness as career development agents. We noted earlier that parents often need to know about the process of career development and have their knowledge of career information expanded. The program we will describe next was developed by the Career Development Program at Boys Town Center, over a three year period. It has been field tested in over 37 states at more than 200 locations. The program recognizes the influence parents and families have on children's career decision-making and seeks to multiply the effectiveness of school counselors and other school-based career education efforts by providing parents the resources and information they need to be effective career advisors.

The "Today's Youth and Tomorrow's Careers " seminar (Otto, 1984), is an eight-hour program that can be held either over four weekly, two-hour sessions or in one eight-hour weekend day session. The seminar includes lectures by a trained leader, filmstrip presentations, guided discussions, handouts, and take-home activities to be used with children. The project reports that, typically, 25-30 parents participate in the seminar. The major topic areas covered in the seminar are:

> 1. Tomorrow's employment opportunities--What are current trends in the labor market? In what areas are the best employment opportunities? What changes are occurring in the types of jobs and the kinds of workers needed for those jobs?
>
> 2. Career preparation options--What are the differences between degrees and certificates? What kinds of colleges are there? What should parents know about vocational preparation programs; apprenticeships; on-the-job training; and federal civil service or military training?
>
> 3. Career planning--Will a college degree be worth it in the 1980s? Will vocational preparation pay off? What are the probable costs and payoffs in terms of options for an uncertain future?
>
> 4. Career exploration resources--What are the best materials? The latest information? Where can parents get it?
>
> 5. Financial aid--The picture is changing. What will career preparation cost? How can parents afford it? What financial aid is available? How can parents find out?
>
> 6. Career planning resources--what information on occupations and career preparation options is available in the local career center? The seminar includes either a walk-through or a discussion of the guidance center to acquaint parents with counselors and the basic resources. (Otto, 1984, pp. 263-264)

The take-home materials that participants receive include copies of Youth and Careers: A Guide for Parents (Otto, 1983b) and Career Explorations (Otto, 1983b). The latter is a workbook designed to be used by parents with their children.

Another approach to the parent seminar might be a "Workshop on Interests and Career Choices" (Lea, 1976). The goals of this type of workshop are to provide parents more information about the impact of interests on career decision-making and to stimulate dialogue about occupations between parents and children. The activities in this workshop center around Holland's theory of personality/occupational types and the results of appropriate interest inventories. Participants and their children each complete an interest inventory, the results of which yield, or can be transposed into, a Holland Code descriptive of their personality/occupational type. Children complete the inventory in the usual manner, but parents are asked to complete the inventory three ways: first, according to their own preferences, second, according to how they think their child would answer, and finally, according to how they hoped their child would respond. Parents and their children complete the interest inventories prior to the parent workshop meeting.

During the parent workshop, Holland's theory of vocational choice and

personality type is explained. Then, a profile of inventory results is shared with the parents which indicates: the child's personality type, the parent's personality type, the personality type the parent expected their child to have, and the personality type the parent hoped the child might have. These results are reviewed in light of the following reflective questions:

1. Is your child's code like yours? Why? Why not? Can you accept this?
2. Is your child's code what you thought it would be? Do you feel you need to get to know your child a little better?
3. Are your expectations and hopes for your child fair in terms of your child's personality type?
4. What's the next step for you and your child? (Lea, 1976, p. 374).

The descriptive information gathered from this workshop can help parents encourage their child's career exploration. It can assist parents in adopting realistic career goals for their child that are compatible with the child's interests rather than their own. An understanding of the differences among personality types may also help both parent and child understand each other better. A "Social-Type" parent may be able to gain insight into why their "Realistic-Type" child has resisted suggestions to examine helping or people-oriented jobs in favor of more practical, skilled-trade occupations. The variety of ways the information from this workshop can be used to promote parent-child understanding and interaction is limited only by the counselor's creativity.

Locally developed career seminars for parents can be structured around some of the topics identified above or they can be planned to focus on specific themes like "How Parents Can Enhance Career Development in Children," "Parents as Key Career Education Educators," or "Exploring Career Interests with My Child." Such seminars provide counselors with the opportunity to share information with parents about the influential role they play in their children's career development and how they can help in the career choice process.

Parent Support/Discussion Groups might be developed following any of the educational groups mentioned above and may be offered as a series of sessions focusing on a v ariety of topics or as several sessions focusing on a specific area of interest to group members. These less formal groups might provide a forum in which counselors can share with parents some of the various ways they can enhance the career awareness and preparation of their children. Some of the activities, approaches, and attitudes suggested by career educators and career counselors include:

1. Learn about the vocational development process--the seeds of vocational choice are planted in early childhood.

2. Listen and respond to children's talk about occupational dreams, aspirations, fears, etc.

3. Present the work you do in a positive manner.

4. Provide opportunities for your child to visit you at work or to observe and talk with others in various work settings.

5. Agree to serve as career/occupational role models for your child's school/class.

6. Allow children to participate in the work that must be done in the home/family structure.

7. Advocate expanded career opportunities for all individuals without regard to social, ethnic, or sexual stereotypes.

8. Actually collaborate with your child's school counselors and teachers on career-related activities.

9. Praise your children's work products and positive work habits. Self-concept is enhanced when parents express interest in their children's activities.

10. Encourage children to participate in a variety of community or school activities to explore their interests, abilities, and limitations (i.e., Scouts, 4H, YW/MCA, etc.).

11. Foster positive interpersonal rela tionships--most individuals who lose their jobs do so because they do not know how to cooperate with others.

12. Encourage the productive use of leisure time.

13. Help children become aware of the relationships between education and work through the assignments they bring home.

14. Help children learn that the basic work attitudes of promptness, respect, and responsibility are expected both at school and at home.

15. Help children learn to budget their time among chores, school, and play, and provide a climate conducive to study in the home.

16. Help children understand both the benefits and the responsibilities of work.

17. Help children think about work values as part of their system of personal values.

18. Encourage children to become adaptable and flexible so they will be able to adjust to changes in the job market.

Additional resources for involving parents and families in the career education process include: "Family Counseling for Career Development" (Hummel, 1980,) and Careers: A Guide for Parents and Counselors (Laramore, 1978).

The advantages of providing career information through the parent group method are several. Group meetings are efficient in that more individuals can be seen per counselor contact. The group setting provides parents with peer resources whose experiences they can relate to and learn from. The most important advantage or result of parent career education programs like those described above is that parents who participate tend to engage in significantly more communication with their children about jobs (Shoffner & Klemer, 1973).

SUMMARY

Developing an active, collaborative relationship between schools and parents, with a goal of enhancing the career guidance of young adolescents, is a difficult task. The school counselor, by training and school position, is often the individual change agent who spearheads the development of innovative programs and consultation activities designed to involve and educate teachers and parents in the career development and career decision-making processes of their children. Affecting change in school settings can be a tedious, time-consuming and lonely procedure. The information and activities presented here provide a starting point for the work of the local school change agent. In order for any innovative career guidance effort to be successful, counselors/change agents must be visible, active, persistent, and ready resource people to the students, teachers, parents and community members they wish to involve.

If parents and community members know what counselors do, they will support the work of the counselor. One midwestern counselor, whose position was being terminated because of reduced funds to the system, was retained after more than 400 parents showed up for a school board meeting demanding that he be retained for their children. But in order to have the level of support we have described, counselors must clearly articulate their programs to administrators, teachers, children, and, more importantly, to parents. This requires that counselors provide a service that is needed and valued by their constituency, that they are able to articulate their program to community leaders, and that they are perceived as providing a service which is valued. We have seen this occur in many of our schools - we look forward to seeing it in many more.

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CAREER GUIDANCE PROJECT

Participating Schools Listed
by Rural, Suburban, Town, and Metropolitan

RURAL

Argos Jr. High
Barr-Reeve Jr/Sr
Benjamin Rush Jr. High
Bloomfield Jr. High
Central Noble Middle
Churubusco Jr. High
Covington Middle School
Hagerstown Jr/Sr High
Knightstown Jr. High
Lewis Cass Jr/Sr High
Liberty Jr. High
Lowell Middle School
Mt. Vernon Jr. High
North Judson Jr. High
North Knox Jr. High
North Putnam Jr/Sr High
Owen Valley Middle School
Shenandoah Middle School
Shoals Jr/Sr High
South Adams Jr. High
South Vermillion Middle
Southern Wells Jr. High
Tri-Central Jr. High
Tri-County Middle School
Triton Middle
Wakarusa Middle School
West Jay Jr. High
Westview Jr. High
Wheeler Jr/Sr High
Winamac Community Middle

SUBURBAN

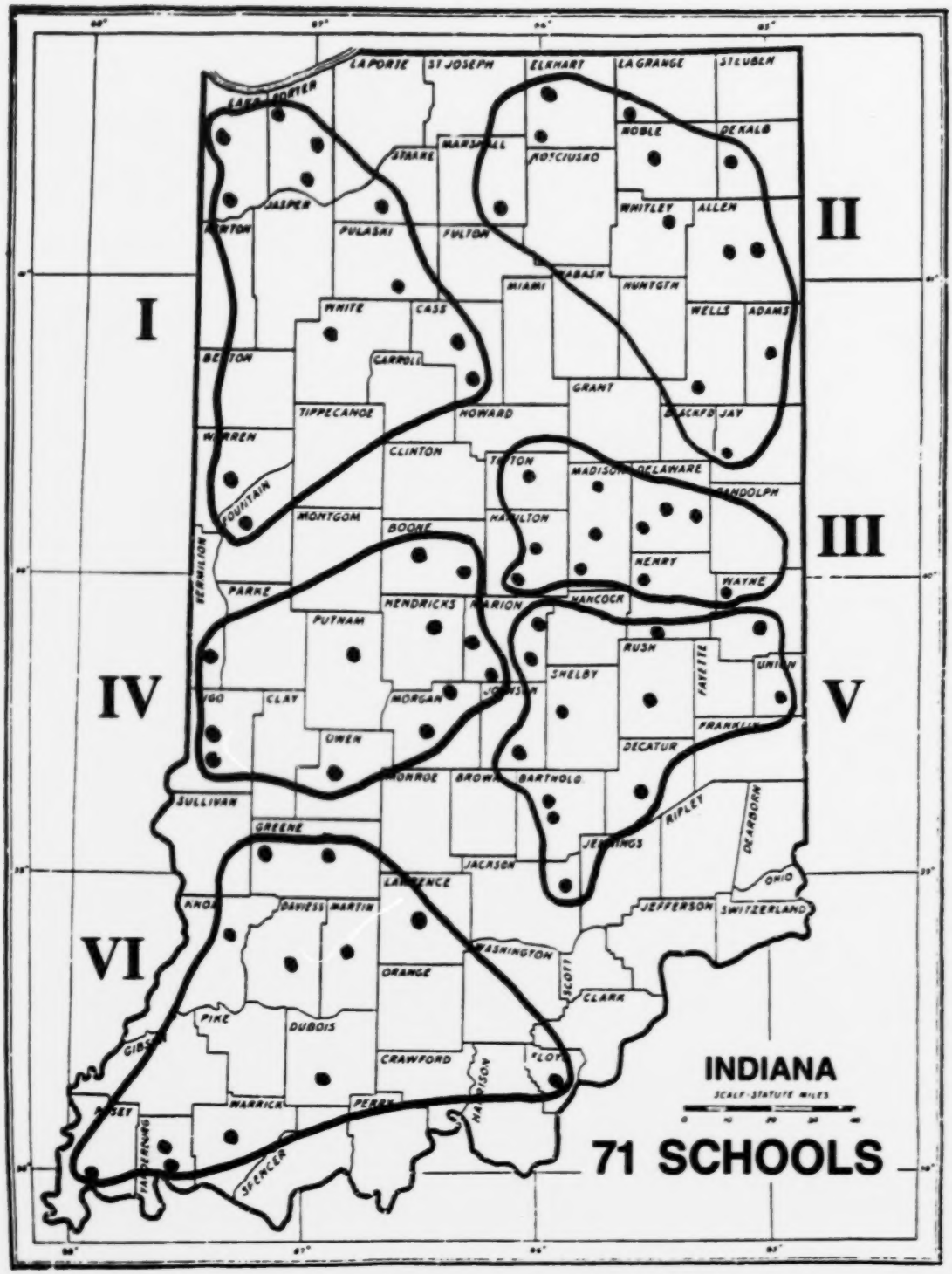
Alexandria Middle School
Boone Grove Jr/Sr High
Boonville Jr. High
Brownsburg Jr. High
Carmel Jr. High
Concord Jr. High
Edinburgh Comm. Jr/Sr High
Franklin Township Middle
Garrett Jr. High
Hamilton Southeastern
Heritage Jr/Sr High
Kahler Middle School
Lebanon Middle School
Martinsville West Middle
Nathaniel Scribner Jr.
Paul Hadley Jr. High
Pendleton Middle School
Selma Middle School
Yorktown Middle School
Zionsville Middle

TOWN

Bedford Jr. High
Central Middle School
Dennis Middle School
Greensburg Jr. High
Lincoln Middle School
Linton Jr. High
Northside Middle School
Seymour Middle School
Southridge Middle School

METROPOLITAN

Belzer Middle School
Ben Davis Jr. High
Creston Jr. High
Evans Middle School
Franklin Middle School
Honey Creek Jr. High
Lane Middle School
Northside Middle School
Sarah Scott
Seeger Jr. High
Thompkins Middle School
Willowcreek Middle School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FULTON
MIAMI
WABASH
HUNTGTN
WHITE
CASS
WELLS
ADAMS
BENTON
CARROLL
GRANT
TIPPECANOE
HOWARD
BLACKFD
JAY
WARREN
CLINTON
TIPTON
MADISON
DELAWARE
RANDOLPH
FOUNTAIN
MONTGOM
BOONE
HAMILTON
HENRY
WAYNE
VERMILION
PARKE
HENDRICKS
MARION
HANCOCK
PUTNAM
RUSH
FAYETTE
UNION
SHELBY
VIGO
CLAY
MORGAN
JOHNSON
FRANKLIN
OWEN
DECATUR
MONROE
BROWN
BARTHOLO
SULLIVAN
RIPLEY
DEARBORN
GREENE
JENNINGS
JACKSON
OHIO
LAWRENCE
KNOX
DAVIESS
MARTIN
JEFFERSON
SWITZERLAND
WASHINGTON
ORANGE
SCOTT
CLARK
PIKE
DUBOIS
GIBSON
CRAWFORD
FLOYD
WARRICK
PERRY
HARRISON
SPENCER
INDIANA
SCALE - STATUTE MILES
71 SCHOOLS